

Plunging in Liberty Bonds Is Nothing — Compared to Plunging Into Machine Gun Fire!

# 50 to 200 Dead In Munition Blast

Continued from page 1

yesterday that twenty-five firemen, twelve marines and ten coast guards had lost their lives in the first great explosion. One of the bodies recovered were the tattered remnants of a coast guard uniform. The head and both legs are missing.

The fire then got completely out of the hands of those who were fighting it. At 4 a. m. a shell soaring up like a great rocket from one flaming building crashed in through the roof of a warehouse where several hundred pounds of TNT were stored. This thunderclap was heavier than the first, and caused additional damage and probably further loss of life.

Just what transpired thereafter is not certain, for the cordon of soldiers surrounding the burning factory was drawn tighter and no one was allowed to pass through, except fire fighters and rescuers.

All Rush for Safety These soon had to abandon their efforts entirely. Building after building became a mass of crackling flame. The heat was terrific, and at last the order was given to withdraw all men to points at least two miles from the plant.

There they waited, while the fusillade of bursting shells quickened into drum fire and the flames reached higher and higher. A warehouse filled with nine-inch projectiles caught fire, and heavier voices mingled with the chorus of six and three inch shells.

The flames continued to spread, but there was nothing to do but wait. At 10:09 they reached one of the supplementary TNT magazines. This was the worst concussion of the day. It wrought untold damage in South Amboy and other nearby communities. Buildings in lower New York City were rocked and quivered. Employees in some of the older structures were told to leave. Windows were punched in for nearly fifty miles around.

While the military authorities were preparing to order an evacuation of all towns within the ten-mile zone, another explosion came at 10:30. When the order was sent out, it was found that most of the inhabitants of the threatened area were in flight already. Wires were down and Morgan was cut off from the outside world. The New York & Long Branch Railroad was blocked, and residents of Matamoras, Perth Amboy and other towns fed by this road were obliged to take to the highways in their flight.

The pall of death and disaster over the plant became heavier and wider. Urged on by the wind, the fire was sweeping toward Chesapeake Creek. At a pier beside this creek barges loaded with TNT were tied up. In a magazine built into the bank was an enormous quantity of TNT, the heaviest explosive known. If the fire kept working in that direction, the authorities believed that it would be only a matter of a few hours before a bursting shell would be responsible for a disaster beyond which the damage up to that time would be insignificant.

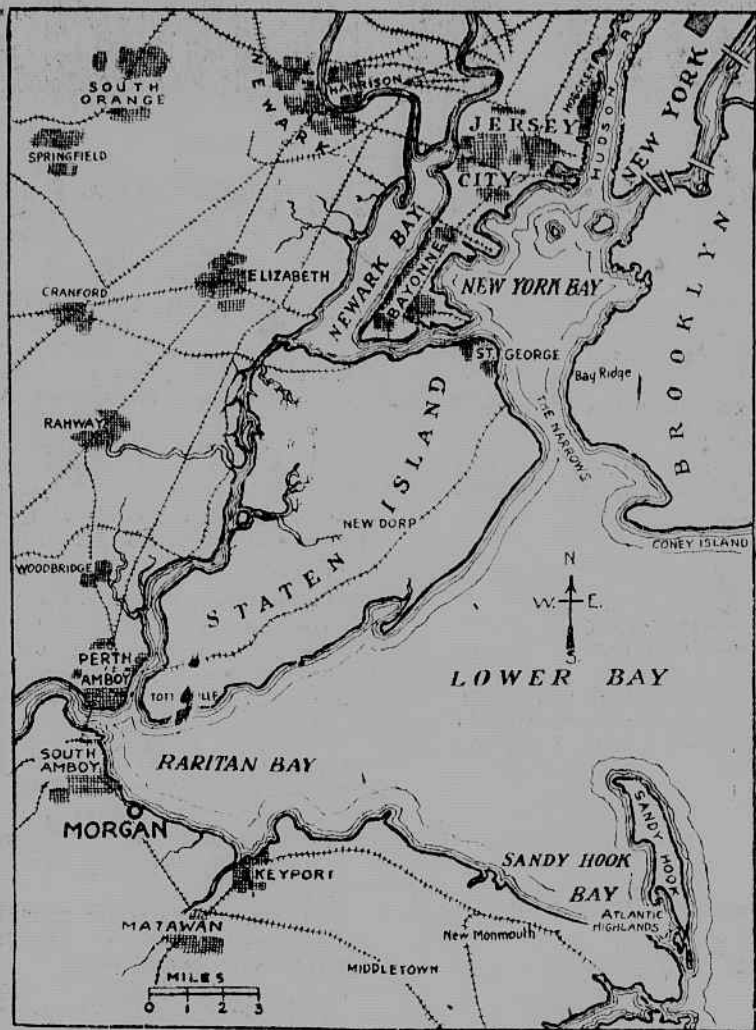
Still, there was nothing to do but wait. Nothing human could have lived in the blistering heat area about the fire, even if he had been able to escape the shells, which were dropping like rain.

Other Plants Threatened There was additional danger, for the bursting projectiles began to fall uncomfortably near the Hercules powder plant, a mile away, and were edging in toward the factory of the California Loading Company, two miles off.

At noon came the last of the mighty earthquake blasts—another TNT storehouse. This completed the wreck that its forerunners had begun in South Amboy and Perth Amboy. The South Amboy Hospital, jammed with the injured who had been brought there during the night and early morning, had to be evacuated. Windows and doors had been blown in and it was feared that the entire structure might collapse.

By this time South Amboy was practically deserted. So great had been the burden placed upon the bridge over the Raritan during the previous twenty-four hours that it was feared it

## SCENE OF THE BATTLE AT HOME



Sayreville Township in New Jersey bore the brunt of the explosions which began early yesterday morning in the main magazine of the Gillespie plant in Morgan. South Amboy has been almost entirely evacuated by the civilian population aggregating thousands. For twenty-four hours the battle against the spread of fire and explosions has gone on. Shocks from the explosions which continued all day yesterday have been felt through the territory covered by this map.

There was a community housing thousands of workers, consisting of large shacks or dormitories. This mushroom village had its motion picture theatres and other amusement centres. The first explosion occurred in Unit 61-1. Here "boosters," the detonating mechanism used in exploding shells, are manufactured. Seven thousand pounds of TNT went up here. Shortly afterward the adjoining units, 61-2, 71-1 and 71-2, caught fire and exploded.

Firemen from the plant, supported by workmen and the military guards, pitted their puny efforts against the conflagration, ignoring the explosions, which sent missiles sparing over their heads. One of these early detonations was so powerful that the windows of a passing train were shattered and every light in it extinguished instantaneously. Physicians and ambulances were rushed from South Amboy and other cities and added their endeavors to those of the workmen who stuck to their posts, giving ground only when scorching out. The grounds about the plant were littered with human as well as inanimate debris.

Fireman Killed at Post A train filled with explosives was on a siding at the plant when the fire started. A railroad foreman who realized the added peril to the fire fighters in that concentration of powder coupled an engine to the train and started to pull it out. After he had got the cars in motion a shell fragment drove through the engine cab, killing him. With the dead fireman on the floor of the cab the train rolled gently out of the immediate danger zone and was stopped by another trainman, who saw that the engineer's seat was empty.

Beyond the heroic line of fire fighters was another of guards, who had to use their utmost efforts to prevent the wives of workmen from hurling themselves into peril of death to search for their husbands. A trestle leading from Perth Amboy to a point near the plant was jammed with hysterical women, who were denied nearer approach.

The plant hospital soon became filled beyond its capacity, and the ambulances hurrying other victims to the City Hospital at Perth Amboy filled that institution. A hotel in that city was turned into a temporary hospital to handle the overflow. Army surgeons were sent from the base hospital at Colonia, N. J., and many of the injured were taken there.

A heroine of the disaster was a plucky telephone operator who stuck to her switchboard within half a mile of the first explosion, plugging in calls for assistance while shell fragments and larger debris rained about her hut and every pane of glass in the structure was shattered.

South Amboy was virtually deserted by dawn, so far as its own inhabitants were concerned, while schools, theatres, halls and other public places were filled with refugees from places closer to the point of danger. Scarcely a pane of glass survived in Perth Amboy, and its occupants consisted largely of a remnant of the Home Defence Corps which had rallied to guard the exposed buildings and their contents. Mayor J. P. Tenbroeck of that city ordered all saloons closed and directed the public to keep within doors. Similar conditions prevailed at North Amboy and Sewaren.

The Central Railroad of New Jersey was compelled early to suspend passenger traffic beyond Sewaren. Like Belgians driven by the Hun into exile, some five thousand destitute American women and children trickled into lower Manhattan yesterday from the Staten Island ferries, carrying with them trifling remnants of homes

or no effect upon the people or the general war effort at the Battery the young women in uniform, from the National Woman's Army Motor Corps, sped over the roads of the south shore to Tottenville at high speed, giving no heed to the warnings that they might at any minute be hurled from the roads by concussion.

Of all the refugees that came to South Ferry yesterday none attracted more attention or elicited more sympathy than eight little boys between the ages of five and six who had fled from the orphanage of the New York Foundling Asylum at Huguenot. They trudged alone in the cars, three Sisters, who had no difficulty in keeping the little fellows in line. They had been almost in a state of panic throughout the night of explosions, one of the Sisters explained, and were now willing to do anything they were told to do.

On the ferryboat from St. George to Manhattan and the Battery the tiny refugees received candies and popcorn from passersby with whom they chatted. All were put on trolley cars and taken to the New York Foundling Asylum in this city.

The work of caring for the refugees was well handled, and by nightfall the work of segregating the homeless and providing for them was done. More than twenty automobiles in charge of patriotic owners were congregated at South Ferry last night, and within a few minutes seventy men, women and children were whisked away to the headquarters of the Salvation Army. The others went to private homes. The Red Cross Motor Corps had twelve ambulances on hand to care for those who were too ill or infirm to travel otherwise.

Over 100 refugees from Perth Amboy reached Jersey City early last evening. As many more were reported to be on the way there in army motor trucks. The refugees were taken to the 4th Regiment Armory, Bergen Avenue and Mercer Street, which was thrown open for their accommodation. Cots for them to sleep on were provided by the Red Cross, and several other organizations took charge of providing the stricken people with food and clothing.

Christ Hospital, early in the evening sent its ambulance with three doctors, to the New York Foundling Asylum at Perth Amboy. During the afternoon and evening the ambulance brought several patients suffering from influenza, from the Perth Amboy Hospital.

A Liberty Loan celebration in front of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society home, 229 East Broadway, was stifled for a few moments last night while J. K. Pain, general manager, made a passageway through the crowd for some forty shivering, ill-clad and weary men, women and children who had just completed a confusing and panic-stricken journey from Perth Amboy. The homes of the refugees had been wrecked over their heads and some of them had escaped in their night clothes, making up their deficiencies in attire as opportunity offered during their trip. One of them, Nathan Greenstein, had six children; another, Abraham Cohen, nine. They were taken in at the home, fed and put to bed.

Stricken District Like Belgium As Help Arrives While the mightiest salvos of explosion still were waiting to batter Perth Amboy and surrounding towns, sister communities out of the zone of actual damage were rushing aid to the homeless made homeless by the terrible blasts.

The prosaic roads leading away from the stricken towns of Perth Amboy, South Amboy, Morgan and half a dozen other villages became for a time yesterday like highways lifted from plundered Belgium or Northern France. Government authorities who arrived at the morning and took charge of affairs and ordered the evacuation of all habitations within a radius of ten miles of the danger point. There was no difficulty in enforcing this order. By the time it reached many of the affected towns the evacuation had already taken place, and the roads were choked with fugitives in automobiles and carriages and on foot.

It is estimated that more than sixty thousand persons have deserted their homes within the last twenty-four hours. Trucks and vans were pressed into service. One of the latter, filled with twenty-four persons, was tearing along the Lincoln Highway yesterday when it was halted by a militiaman. "We're not going anywhere, especially," the chauffeur responded to the query. "We're just going away."

Governor Edge of New Jersey on learning of the evacuation early yesterday morning called out the militia to protect the homes of the fugitives and to prevent looting. Companies of infantry and machine gunners were rushed to Morgan and the surrounding country from Red Bank, Elizabeth and New Brunswick.

Stemming the tide that flowed along the roads, away from the still thundering factory at Morgan, came relief organizations from Newark, Jersey City and New York. The Atlantic Division of the Red

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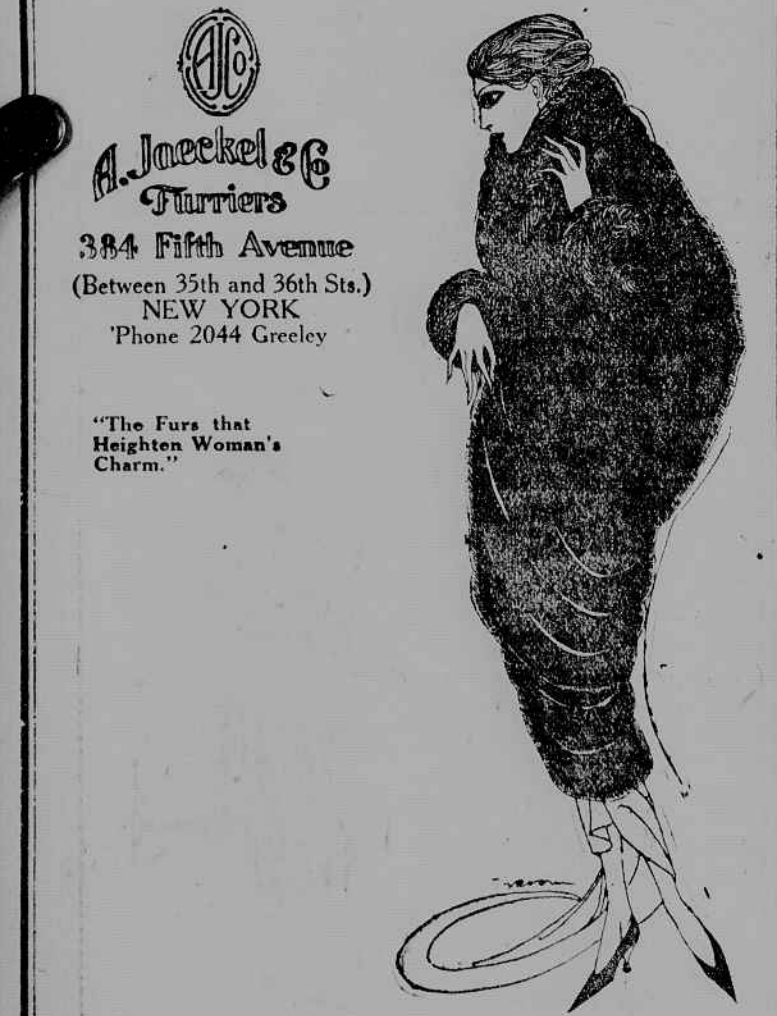
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